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THE HISTORY OF THE MYTH-MAKING AGE.

The Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times in India, South-western Asia, and Southern Europe. By J. F. Hewitt. Vol. i. Pp. lxxv + 627 (1894), 18s. Vol. ii. Pp. xxxv + 382 (1895), 12s. (Westminster: Constable and Co., Ltd.)

History and Chronology of the Myth-making Age. By J. F. Hewitt. Pp. xlviii + 682. (London: Parker and Co., 1901.) 15s. net.

THE object of the present short article is not so much to call the attention of the readers of NATURE to two works by Mr. J. F. Hewitt, late Commissioner of Chota Nagpore, who has devoted many years of hard work to the elucidation of the history of the ruling races of prehistoric times in India, south-western Asia, and southern Europe, as to mention some of the difficulties connected with the history and chronology of the myth-making age. To discuss at length and in detail the contents of the three volumes the titles of which appear at the head of this review would require several numbers of NATURE, or a whole volume, and while an attempt is here made to indicate the general line of his arguments and the trend of his opinions, the reader, if he wishes to become master of the subjects as treated by Mr. Hewitt, must read the works themselves. Mr. Hewitt brings to bear upon his studies a knowledge of several Indian dialects, and a general knowledge of what other investigators have written about subjects which are germane to his own; his observations and opinions have not been formed hastily, and every fair-minded reader will, after a perusal of his works, arrive at the conclusion that he is an honest, even if sometimes mistaken, seeker after facts, and that, so far as his knowledge will allow him to do so, he sets the truth before those who will take the trouble to read what he has written. The chief importance of his books, in the writer's opinion, is the proof which they afford of the little value of philology in arriving at any decision as to the religious views and practices of early nations; moreover, we cannot help wishing that when Mr. Hewitt was making his quotations he had taken the trouble to give the words and passages on which he bases his arguments in the languages in which they were originally written. We have no intention of finding fault or of making carping criticisms, but Orientalists other than experts in Indian languages would have felt much more comfortable if they could have seen before them the Babylonian, or Assyrian, or Egyptian forms of the words which he quotes. The answer to this objection is, of course, that the use of mixed Oriental types is a costly luxury to an author, and to many it will seem a sufficient one; meanwhile, let us thank Mr. Hewitt for what we have, and then proceed to consider generally the aim and scope of his work.

The older of the works before us is that which deals with the ruling races of prehistoric times in India, and consists of a series of eleven essays, six of which were published in 1894 and the remaining five in 1895. In a

somewhat lengthy preface, Mr. Hewitt explains that he intended to call especial attention by means of them to the chronological data which can be obtained from "social laws and customs, mythic history and ritual," and to show how the leading epochs of civilisation succeeded one another in prehistoric times. In the first essay he describes how he was drawn into the line of study in 1863, when he went to Chota Nagpore as Deputy Commissioner, and how the system of indigenous Indian village communities spread thence through all the countries lying between it and north-west Germany. Mr. Hewitt next thought he had found that the clues to the history of early Hindu ritual given in the Rigveda and elsewhere could only be explained by comparison with data obtained from Accadian texts, and he apparently still thinks that Hindu and Accadian mythology developed on nearly identical lines, the Zend ritual being a common link between them. He also came to the conclusion that Egyptian religious and national history in the two stages of its growth can be traced to Indian and Accadian sources, and that it was impossible that the maritime commerce, whence the wealth was earned which made the Euphratean countries and Egypt rulers of the ancient world, could have been founded except by the Indian seaman. In the essays which follow he sets out the reasons, philological, religious, and historical, which have induced him to hold these views, and adduces a number of theories, many of an astronomical character, in support of the same. We must, however, at the very outset protest against the statement that the Egyptian religion, as such, can be traced to India, and we much doubt if Hindu mythology can be compared with Accadian mythology in any way. Thanks to the labours of men like Brugsch and Maspero, we know a little about the Egyptian religion and the gods of Egypt, and the more we know the more we find that the oldest gods of Egypt were indigenous, and that the religion of the earliest period was the very characteristic product of an indigenous race of north-east Africa. Whether Mr. Hewitt is right or we are, others must decide; but any comparison between the name of the Egyptian god Osiris (Ās-ār) and the Accadian god Asar (or Asaru) is scientifically impossible, and when he says that Heru (or "Horus" as he spells it) was the equivalent of the Ashēra, "or rain pole of the Semites," and the "Tur or meridian pole of the Akkadians," we are obliged to disagree entirely with him. The Accadians appear to have had a god called Zu-ab or Apzu, who had something in common with the Egyptian Nu (not Nun, as Mr. Hewitt writes the name), but to say that both Accadians and Egyptians worshipped Nu is incorrect. In the first essay we also have a long dissertation about St. George, who, according to Mr. Hewitt, was:—

"the rain-god, the knight of the cross, for it was in the centre of the tortoise earth that the mountain of rain-god stood, and it is from the cross forming the ground plan of the tortoise, with the pole or mountain in the centre, that the Egyptian star of Horus was formed" (p. 17).

But in Egyptian mythology Horus had no special star, and the five-rayed star was the common symbol of stars and gods in general. If anything, St. George was a solar god, and all the details of his history go to prove

his identity, not with a rain-god, but with the sun-god Rā in Egypt and Marduk in Mesopotamia. We cannot follow Mr. Hewitt here in all his derivations, because it seems that he is influenced too much by the similarity of the sounds of roots and not by the probability of their relationship. Thus, on p. 27, he speaks of "Rama, meaning 'the darkness' in Sanskrit and 'the heights' in Hebrew." The fact is that "Rāma" does not mean "heights" in Hebrew, but *Rāmāh* does mean "high"; even so, however, it is not in any way related to the Sanskrit Rāma, and the words Rāma and Rāmāh must not be compared in this way. The second essay, which deals with the primitive village, is more interesting, and contains a number of original remarks which show that Mr. Hewitt has thought out the subject with care; but in the third we again touch serious philological difficulties. Mr. Hewitt has followed the speculations of many masters, and has in consequence made a good many mistakes. Thus, Isis was not a star-goddess originally, but her soul went to the star Sept, and the name Āst (Isis) has no connection with Accadian at all. In this, as in many other places, Mr. Hewitt has adopted Prof. Hommel's views, which are not generally accepted either by Assyriologists or Egyptologists. At this time of day it is little less than foolish to quote Lenormant's works on Accadian, for it is now well known that his skill in reading cuneiform of any sort was very small, and that his imagination and boldness of assertion were very great. On p. 292 we have an extraordinary set of equations, e.g. Tur, the pole=taurus=Syriac *tawrd*, a bull=Hebrew *shur*, an ox=Tyre! In the fourth essay a number of astronomical myths are described, and Mr. Hewitt lays down the theory that the primitive year contained two seasons, that it was followed by one of three seasons, and that mankind eventually made use of a year of five seasons. He supports his theory by means of a large number of impossible philological comparisons, and says, among other remarkable things, that the constellation Leo

"was the Māsu or Moses, who, as the pillar of cloud and fire, led the star-worshippers to the top of Mount Nebo, consecrated to the planet Mercury, the great Nabi or prophet of the Semites" (p. 352).

We do not intend to weary the reader with further extracts from these essays, for the passages already quoted will explain Mr. Hewitt's methods, and serve to show how philology is made to run riot in them; the other remarks on the volumes generally we shall make after we have briefly described the contents of the work "History and Chronology of the Myth-making Age." The period of time which Mr. Hewitt discusses in this portly volume begins with the "first dawn of civilisation" and ends at the time when the sun entered Taurus at the vernal equinox between 4000 and 5000 B.C., his "pivot date" being B.C. 4200. About this time, he says, it ceased to be a universally observed national custom to record history in the form of historic myths (*sic*), and national history began to pass out of the mythic stage into that of annalistic chronicles recording the events of the reigns of kings and the deeds of individual heroes, statesmen and law-givers. It would be extremely interesting to know why B.C. 4200 was fixed upon as the pivot

date, for there is reason to believe that the making of myths did not cease at that period. For all practical purposes Mr. Hewitt's book on the myth-making age is divided into three parts, which treat of the age of pole-star worship, the age of lunar-solar worship and the age of solar worship. These are followed by four appendices, which give a list of the Hindu stars, versions of the "House that Jack built," the legend of Ino and a dissertation on Melgareth. The section on pole-star worship treats of the year of two seasons and of five-day weeks, the year of three seasons and of five-day weeks, and the year of three seasons and of six-day weeks; the first of these years, Mr. Hewitt asserts, was measured by the movements of the Pleiades and the solstitial sun, the second by Orion, and the third by the eel-god. The second section treats of the epoch of the three-year cycle and of the nine-day weeks, of the year of the horse's head of eleven months and eleven-day weeks; and the third section discusses the fifteen-months year of the sun-god of the eight-rayed star and the eight-days week, the years of seven-day weeks and seventeen and thirteen months, the years of eighteen and twelve months, and of five- and ten-day weeks. In proof of the views which he holds on all these difficult subjects, Mr. Hewitt quotes largely from a great many works by authorities of varying trustworthiness; and he reproduces an appalling number of equations, a few of which, taken singly, are correct, but which, when looked at as a whole, are erroneous and misleading, and confuse the mind of the reader. Thus, on p. 29, we are told that Zeus is a form of the North Pole god Tan, that Tan = the Cretophœnician (*sic*) I-tan-os = the Accadian I-tan-a (*sic*), and the "tree mothers" of Accad, China, Germany and other countries are declared to have a common origin and to typify the same things. Statements of this kind are difficult to understand, at least when their writer intends the reader to believe that the ideas concerning the subjects of them were common to all peoples of antiquity, irrespective of the distance of their countries from each other. Moreover, they make it exceedingly difficult for any student to accept the generalisations which they express. There are, of course, many beliefs and conceptions which are common to all races of mankind, which are on the same level of civilisation, but there are large numbers of others which are not, and there are many which belong to a particular race, or to a people who live under peculiar geographical and physical circumstances. The cosmogony and theology of mountain races are different from those of the dwellers in plains, and those of the Semites differ from those of the Aryan nations. Another point is also to be considered in connection with the matter. Mr. Hewitt quotes authorities on the Chinese, Accadian, Sanskrit, Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Dravidian, and numbers of other languages, and without meaning to be disrespectful to him or to belittle his work, we must say that we have no belief in the philological omniscience which can decide about such abstruse questions as he formulates and answers. Men like Wellhausen and Kuenen have shown us what can be done in elucidating ancient religious beliefs by means of a knowledge of a group of cognate languages, but in our opinion no man is to be

trusted when he professes to deduce relationship of words, names and beliefs in Egyptian, which is an African (Hamitic) language, and in Babylonian, which is a Semitic language, and in Sanskrit, which is an Aryan language, and in Chinese and Accadian, which, whether they be related or not, have no relationship with any one of the other three. Mr. Hewitt, like Mr. John O'Neill, in his "Night of the Gods," has done a useful piece of work in collecting a mass of facts and theories, but they want sorting and arranging and winnowing, and especially condensing, before they can be used by the students of the various religions of antiquity. What is more important, moreover, is that the derivations of the words and names should be checked by experts in the various languages in which the books of the various religious systems are written, so that the student may be quite sure that no mistake has been made. Descending from generalities to particulars, we note that Mr. Hewitt speaks of the "Hittite" as if it were a known language; but it is not, and no inscription written in the script which is commonly called "Hittite" has yet been deciphered. It is true that "translations" of certain "Hittite" texts have been printed and published, but no trained philologist admits that they really represent the meaning of the texts from which they are alleged to have been made. Even the identity of the Hittites of the Bible has not yet been established, for whilst the Khatti of the Assyrian monuments may be identical with the Kheta of the Egyptian records, there is no evidence that either name is connected with the Hittites, or that the Hittites were related to the Kheta and Khatti. Similarly, Mr. Hewitt alludes to the Accadian language as if it too were known; but every student of comparative Semitic philology is well aware that the study of Accadian is so little advanced that certain eminent Assyriologists, no doubt erroneously, even now do not regard it as a language at all!

The general impression which a careful perusal of the book leaves on the mind is that Mr. Hewitt has proved too much; but be this as it may, it is our firm conviction that if he wishes his labour and learning to receive the study and recognition which they deserve, he must condense his statements and formulate his theses in such a way that the student who is not an Oriental philologist may be able to make up his mind what are the theories which Mr. Hewitt sets out to prove, and whether he has proved them or not. A sharp distinction should, of course, be made between theory and fact, but this Mr. Hewitt fails to make. In conclusion, we cannot help wishing that he had confined his attention exclusively to Indian languages, cosmogonies, and theologies, of which, obviously, he has had abundant opportunities of obtaining knowledge at first hand, and that he had not made such lengthy excursions into the domains of Chinese, Semitic, Egyptian and other studies of which he as obviously has no first-hand knowledge whatever, not even enough to distinguish good authorities from bad. He has, in fact, lost an excellent opportunity of writing a most interesting book on the early religious myths of India, and this we sincerely deplore. The indices to the volumes before us are remarkably comprehensive and good, and merit praise.

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CYCLOPEDIA OF HORTICULTURE.

Cyclopedia of American Horticulture. By L. H. Bailey, assisted by Wilhelm Miller [and others]. In 4 vols. quarto. Pp. 2016. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.; New York: the Macmillan Company, 1900 to 1902.) Price 21s. net each volume.

THERE are some books which gain the title "monumental" on the sheer score of size. The present work, which has recently been completed, has earned it, not only by its bulk, but by the quality of its contents, their freshness and diversity, and the originality of their treatment.

There are two ways of producing such a work as this, one by the free use of paste and scissors, a plan not to be despised if the compiler be at once honest and judicious, and the other wherein each article inserted is treated as a monograph. Facts are accumulated, contrasted, classified, so that in the result the reader has placed before him as complete a view of the whole subject as the limitations of space will allow. This is the plan that has been followed by Prof. Bailey and his 450 contributors and assistants. The *Cyclopædia* was to be new, "brand new from start to finish. The illustrations were to be newly made; the cultural suggestions written directly for the occasion from American experience and often presented from more than one point of view; few of the precedents of former cyclopædias to be followed; all matters to be worked up by experts and from sources as nearly as possible original." Considering all these things, the volumes constitute a real triumph of sagacity and organisation on the part of Prof. Bailey.

The matter, so far as we have tested it, is accurate, well set forth and in due proportion—a most difficult thing to secure when the work of so many contributors has to be correlated and adjusted. It is quite clear that a large share of the work, independently of planning and supervising the whole, has fallen to Prof. Bailey. Two things specially strike us in consulting the volumes, the one the way in which science, and especially evolutionary science, permeates the whole book, the other the way in which scientific knowledge has been set forth for the special benefit of commercial horticulture. In most or all books of the kind, botanical and physiological details are given, but here they seem expressly set forth for the benefit of those who make their living out of the land or the forcing-house. Science is not allowed to suffer in the least, but its application to commercial necessities is insisted on to a degree unknown in British horticulture. Prof. Bailey knows and caters for the requirements of the commercial cultivators in all or most of the States of the Union, and not the least valuable of his articles are those concerning the natural features and economic conditions of the several States and Territories.

So far as the plants are concerned, analytical keys are framed, so as to facilitate, by means of contrasting characters, the discovery of the name of each plant and of its salient features. The enormous and irksome labour involved in the construction of these keys can only be appreciated by those who have had to construct similar ones. An error the most trifling in itself may involve the